



April 2025 Friends of the CCBC Newsletter

[Click this link to view in your browser](#)

Please add us to your contacts

Some of our newsletters and emails have been ending up in Friends members' spam or junk email folders. To assure that you receive all our news and invitations, please add the following addresses to your contacts. Thank you!

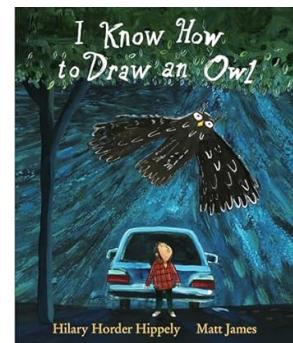
president@ccbcfriends.org membership@ccbcfriends.org friends@g-groups.wisc.edu

In This Newsletter

- upcoming Charlotte Zolotow Award Ceremony information
- Friends Annual Meeting recap
- interview with retiring CCBC librarian Megan Schliesman



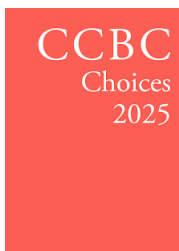
2025 Charlotte Zolotow Award Celebration RSVP



Registration is open for the 2025 Charlotte Zolotow Award Celebration. This in-person event will be held at the CCBC, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm on Saturday, May 3.

Please join us as author Hilary Horder Hippely (*I Know How to Draw an Owl*, 2025 Zolotow winner) accepts her award. All 2025 Honor Books and Highly Commended titles will also be recognized. A reception and book signing will follow the award presentation.

[Online registration](#) is required, and space is limited, so don't delay! This event will be in person only; remote access is not available.



Annual Meeting and Choices Day

The Friends held our 48th Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 1, 2025, followed by the introduction of the 2025 *CCBC Choices* booklist. We revised our bylaws to return to a Friends Board structure with seven members including a president, vice president/president elect, recording secretary, treasurer (2 year term), membership chair, and two members at large. The Friends continue to be financially stable, and we continue to provide funds to publish *CCBC Choices*, sponsor events and programs such as the Charlotte Zolotow Lecture, and provide funds for many additional projects of the CCBC.

We elected the following slate of officers for the 2025-2026 year:

- Carlie Wiseley, President
- Maria Parrott-Ryan, VP/President Elect
- Keri Schlecht, Treasurer
- Molly Jensen, Member at Large
- Tammy Ocampo, Member at Large

Rachel Berkowitz continues to serve as Membership Chair, and Ellen Bunn continues as Recording Secretary.

The CCBC Librarians introduced *CCBC Choices 2025*, recommending 251 books published in 2024 for children and teens from birth through high school age. The fully annotated digital edition of [CCBC Choices 2025](#) can be found on the [CCBC website](#).



CCBC Librarian Megan Schliesman to Retire

After 32 years as a CCBC librarian, Megan Schliesman's last day will be May 23, 2025. In this Q&A, Megan reflects on her time at the CCBC, shares her plans for retirement, and (of course!) mentions a few books that have stuck with her over the years.

Interview by Maria Parrott-Ryan

What is some of the work you're most proud of from your time at the CCBC?

I'm going to start by using 'satisfying' instead of 'proud.' I think some of the most satisfying things I've done are the outreach and education across the years, because that has been an opportunity to share my enthusiasm for some of the great books that are published for children and teens each year. That feels like a real gift, to be able to do that.

One of my favorite things is to walk through the CCBC and see a group of teachers that have worked with us come in, and they're excited as they're talking about some of the books we've pulled for them.

Also, I always think in terms of when we have students here. Our education students in particular, but also library students. I've always said this when I talk to a group: I really hope that you will see something in this room today or hear about something that makes you say, "I didn't know that's what children's literature or young adult literature could be." That is a dimension of my work that I find really satisfying.

Another thing I love about my job is that I get to write a lot. I knew that being one of the authors of [Choices](#) would be part of this work going into it, but the role that writing plays in the work I do at the CCBC has grown and expanded across the years. That's something I find incredibly satisfying. Often, over the past couple decades, I would draft the introduction for *Choices*, in addition to the annotations. And I drafted the [What IF... Forum](#), as well.

From your perspective, what are some of the biggest challenges the CCBC has faced during your time here, and how have you all responded to those challenges?

The first would be our move to Teacher Education [the building]. There was a real emotional component to that. For all of us working at the CCBC at the time, Helen C. White had been our home. That space was so much the CCBC to all of us, and so it was really hard to leave. Then there's all the logistical work of doing that move. Our space in Helen C. White had been recarpeted maybe five to ten years before, and I remember thinking, "I never want to do something like that again," because we had to move all the collections out and move them back in.

But I will say this: we are such a collaborative staff. We really had to strategize. We had a lot of logistical and heavy work support from the School of Education, they really worked with us and the designers on this new space. But in terms of all the things that we had to do at the old CCBC to get ready...we all really had to work together as a staff to think about the order of operation and who was going to take charge of this, and who was going to take charge of that. So, I think it really showcased that collaborative work that we do.

The other specific incident is the challenge that we all faced, which was the pandemic. Merri Lindgren and I were on our annual outreach trip to Rhinelander in March of 2020, and we were driving home going, "You think we're going to be closing?" We started our strategizing in the van on the way home. So again, it was how we worked collaboratively as a staff, because we were thinking about the logistics. We were thinking about our students, and we had work that could be done remotely, so we had to figure out the logistics of that for our students.

As awful as that whole time was, two things happened that I don't think would have were it not for the pandemic. We knew we had to launch [a new website](#) in August of that year because we had the new [books database](#) that was going to integrate with it. The design template existed, and I was

going to be the one populating that template. Until the pandemic, I did not know when that was going to actually happen. So, I suddenly had the time to do it.

And then, we had occasionally dabbled with the idea of going digital for delivery of IF [intellectual freedom] content. We always sent these physical packets, and then we got our first IF transaction during the pandemic, and we couldn't even go into the library to access our resources. So, that really prompted me to think through digital delivery of the IF service packets. And we continued to refine that once we reopened.

How did you become the manager for the CCBC's intellectual freedom services, and what has that work meant to you?

Much in the same way I have known for a while that I'm going to retire, so we have been actively working towards that, the same was true of Ginny Moore Kruse, who was the director and had the vision to create the service. Knowing it was going to be her last year, I was really interested in the service, and so she began actively mentoring me to take over managing this aspect of our work.

At the time the *What IF... Forum* did not yet exist, so it was primarily focusing on the response to people facing potential or actual challenges. So, Ginny would talk through individual calls with me and talk to me about some of the broader things that go into this work. I still sometimes hear Ginny's voice in my head.

I've had other really great mentors and people I've learned from. Helen Adams is a retired school librarian and a former AASL president who I've learned so much from. In recent years, I've had this wonderful collaboration with Monica Treptow at the Department of Public Instruction. And all my colleagues here at the CCBC.

There's the packet that we turn out, which I always call the tangible. The intangible is hoping that we are decreasing that sense of uncertainty and fear and isolation that any person who is reaching out to us has. Those conversations have been incredibly meaningful to me.

What are some memorable moments from your time at the CCBC?

During the pandemic, we had to figure out a way to read and exchange books. At a certain point we were able to start coming in weekly so we could at least pick up some things, but we would come up with this very complicated exchange schedule. This was still when we were all washing our groceries and things.

So, Merri [Lindgren], who lives in Baraboo, would be coming into Madison, and she might drop a package off at K. T. [Horning]'s house or at my house on the porch in a brown paper bag, and then you let it sit. And then Maddie [Tyner Freimuth] and I would arrange to meet in a parking lot over by Hilldale. It felt like we were exchanging contraband.

But you know, it is less specific memories than just the really, really warm feelings I have across the years of the CCBC, not only for my colleagues, the librarians here, but we've had so many amazing students come through here, as well. Every so often, we'll hear from one of them, or we'll run into them at an outreach event or at a conference. And it's just really wonderful to see that, and to have had the opportunity to work with them.

Are there children's books that you've read while at the CCBC that have stuck with you more than others, and that you would still recommend?

The first book I'm going to mention is the one that I've been thinking about rereading for a while,

even though it's not that old. It's called [The Swallow](#), and it's by Charis Cotter. It's a ghost story, and I'm not particularly drawn to ghost stories, but something about this one really struck me, but also, I've always felt an affinity for this book because it's set in Toronto in 1963, and I was born in Toronto in 1963, and so I always felt this resonance with that book.

You know, one of the things that is really great about this work, and what has always kept working at the CCBC really fresh, is that it's new books every year. That is a really wonderful thing. And so, identifying, as we go through the year, the books that we really want to call attention to, and then among those, what are the ones that are really standouts? It's really hard.

Having said that, I'm going to mention a few. One is [Vincent and Theo](#) by Deborah Heiligman. There are a handful of books across the years that I remember the experience of reading the book. I remember where I was, I remember what I was feeling. That is absolutely one of them. It sticks with me. I just thought it was an amazing piece of nonfiction writing for teens.

I have a real soft spot for [Lucky Song](#) by Vera B. Williams, which was the first [Charlotte Zolotow Award](#) winner. It's also a book that I shared a lot with my daughter, because she kind of grew up with the Charlotte Zolotow award. She was born in the second year of the Zolotow.

I remember vividly the experience of reading two books that were in this year's *Choices*. I love pairing them and book-talking them together. I would love to share these books in a literature classroom with teens, and they're both picture books. One is [Jimmy's Rhythm and Blues](#) by Michelle Meadows, about James Baldwin. The other is [A Crown of Stories](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford, about Toni Morrison. These two books are amazing in conveying incredible details about the lives and works of these two writers.

What are your plans for retirement? Will you remain involved in children's literature or libraries?

My plans for retirement are very vague, which my husband finds a little alarming. I know that I want to get involved doing more volunteering, but I can't say that I've landed on what or how I want to do that. I definitely want to write more. I find writing a really great way to process, to invent, and, right now, to rage. So, it's always going to be part of my life, whether I do anything publicly with it or not.

I want to spend more time in nature—that is a huge goal of mine. I'm really interested in learning more about sketching in nature. Audit classes on campus. You know, there's so many possibilities.

I think the one aspect of the work I could see myself perhaps getting back involved in, though maybe more from a citizen perspective, is the intellectual freedom work. And I certainly am counting on my colleagues to let me know when there's a great book that I don't want to miss.

Are there any adult books you're looking forward to reading in retirement?

I have read adult books over the years, but very rarely do I pick up something that I know is really complex and involved, because when I get engaged in a book like that, it's sort of to the exclusion of everything else in my life until I finish it. I just feel like I don't have the time to do that. The one book that I'm actively looking forward to reading is the latest Louise Erdrich, *The Mighty Red*.

I also have not been reading poetry a lot, because again, that takes time and focus that I haven't allowed myself. So, I'm looking forward to that, as well.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

I have just been, on a personal level and on a CCBC librarian level, so grateful to the support of the Friends of the CCBC over the years, and to the people on the board who have volunteered.

We try to make it clear that there are really key things that come out of the CCBC that the Friends support. For years, the publication of *Choices* was the most visible part of that. But also, our ability to go to ALA, and in more recent years, this wonderful physical transformation of how the CCBC feels when you come in. We couldn't have done that without the Friends.

I want people to realize how much I personally, and we as a staff, appreciate the Friends as a group.

Friends of the CCBC

-Supporting the work of the Cooperative Children's Book Center-



image
117K